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INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Bulgaria

SUBJECT Exarch Stefan's Resignation

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1. Exarch Stefan I of the Holy Synod of Bulgaria was ordered by the Bulgarian Government to "resign" his position for reasons of "afflicted health as well as some purely ecclesiastic considerations" on 6 September. An official announcement of the resignation was made on Radio Sofia on 12 September. Soon thereafter, Stefan was evicted from Sofia and he is now living in Karlovo.
2. Among the reasons for the Exarch's resignation are said to be certain anti-Communist statements which appeared in his recent book, which has since been withdrawn from publication. It is also believed that Stefan and the Holy Synod opposed a new Bulgarian law limiting university educations to certain groups of pro-Communist youths. Stefan has also opposed the purge of the Bulgarian ecclesiastical hierarchy and the fact that the Bulgarian Government attempted to use the pulpit for dissemination of political propaganda.
3. Metropolitan Michael of Puse, who is now performing the function of the Exarch, Metropolitan Kiro of Plovdiv and Metropolitan Nikodemus of Stara Zagora, are being considered as possible successors to Stefan.

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